

**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
September 14, 2016**

Members – Present

Jeff Moran, Chair
Anil Lewis, Vice-Chair
Sue Page
Katja Fort-Rhoden
Marsha Legg
Christy Stuart
Tom Laverty
Cindy LaBon
Barry Shaw
Josie Thomas
Jani Willis
Chris Conklin

Members Unable to Attend

Joe Barrett
Michael Whitehill
Will Stocker
Zosia Zaks

DORS Liaisons to Council

Donna Lettow, Policy and Planning
Kim Schultz, Policy and Planning
Jean Jackson, Employment Committee

Candidates for Membership in Attendance

Sue Schaffer
Tracia Price

Guests

Amy Blandford, OBVS – Acting Director
John Stem, DORS

Support Staff

Sandy Bowser

Introduction and Approval of Minutes:

Jeff Moran, Chair welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves. Jeff welcomed our two new

candidates for membership – Sue Schaffer and Tracia Price. The minutes from the May 4, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

Special Guest – John Stem – Statewide Needs Assessment:

Topic: Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA)

CSNA Required Elements:

1. The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Maryland, particularly the vocational rehabilitation needs of –
 - A. Individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services
 - B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program
 - C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system
 - D. Youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including:
 - a. Their need for pre-employment transition services or other training services
 - b. An assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with local education agencies
2. An assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State

The Methodologies that were used: Surveys, Key Informant Interviews, Data Review, Literature Review, and Public Meetings.

The following recommendations were developed:

1. Develop a strategic plan for fulfilling WIOA requirements.
2. Evaluate staffing needs within DORS.
3. Provide opportunities for mutual training and collaboration between DORS and other workforce programs.
4. Increase the agency's capacity to fully utilize the 15% reserve fund for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) statewide.
5. Improve customer service and maximize staff time by utilizing technology.

6. Develop a system for consumers to provide feedback on their satisfaction with services at key points during the rehabilitation process.
7. Improve information and referral services to American Job Centers and other workforce partners for individuals on the DORS waiting list.
8. Improve the variety of employment opportunities available to DORS consumers.
9. Create a catalogue of standard letters in the same foreign languages for which the DORS Application is already available.
10. Increase technology training opportunities for DORS consumers.
11. Expand and increase, as appropriate, the programs and services designed specifically for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, including students in need of Pre-ETS.
12. Promote comprehensive rehabilitation services for Deaf-Blind individuals by establishing a Deaf-Blind workgroup.

The following information, suggestions, recommendations, comments were provided in reference to The Statewide Needs Assessment Report:

- College is not one of the five core Pre-ETS services – which means it does not count towards the 15% of the Pre-ETS funds.
- Interpreter, Reader Services and Orientation & Mobility for Work Readiness can now be counted in the 15% spending for Pre-ETS.
- Deaf-Blind Workgroup – check OBVS Director files for information as this has been completed several different ways; use filed information to possibly reconfigure a new type of workgroup.
- Send out letters quarterly to consumers on waiting list to see if they are still interested in services and give them their estimated wait time.
Ask consumer if their condition has gotten worse.
Policy & Planning Committee to work on developing this survey with John Stem's help.
- Look at how to get information out to 504 students.

Sue Page and the MSRC extends a special thank you to John Stem for volunteering to chair the Needs Assessment project which included organizing the team, scheduling meetings, writing and re-writing the report – THANK YOU JOHN.

Chairperson/Vice Chair Person Report – Jeff Moran and Anil Lewis:

Summary of MSRC Executive Retreat –

The MSRC Executive Committee Planning Retreat was held on August 30th at the Columbia Sheraton Conference Center. The retreat was held to discuss the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, DORS Staffing, DORS Budget, changes to WIOA, and possible agenda items for 2017.

Director's Report – Sue Page

- WIOA Convening Event – Maryland held a WIO Convening event in July. This was an information sharing meeting on how Maryland is going to implement WIOA. It included representatives from DLLR, Department of Human Resources, Department of Education, DORS staff, and Job Center staff.

- Rehabilitation Services Meeting (RSA) had the first of their three regional meetings in August. This meeting was a great opportunity for VR staff, providers, and technical assistance centers staff to discuss specific WIOA topics including 511 sub-minimum wage, supported employment, and pre-employment services. Additional information on pre-employment services was also clarified.; Interpreter, Reader Services and Orientation & Mobility for Work Readiness can now be counted as the 15% of spending for Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- DORS Policy & Planning Meeting – September

DORS Management and Supervisors met to discuss WIOA, the new regulations, DORS policies that need to be implemented, policies than can be discarded and policies that need to be revised. Three workgroups were developed to discuss the following areas: Section 511 – Sub-Minimum Wage, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Supported Employment as these areas have significant changes in the VR program.

There are three significant changes:

Competitive Integrated Employment, Common Performance Measures, and Median Wage

- DORS Symposium on Pre-Employment Transition Services – October 26, 2016

This statewide meeting will be hosted by DORS. The following topics will be discussed: WIOA, Pre-Employment Transition Services, Section 511, and Subminimum Wage. Staff from the Education field, Professionals, Community Providers and DORS Staff will meet to discuss how WIOA will effect Pre-Employment Transition Services and everyone's role. MSRC members are encouraged to attend.

- MRA Conference – October 27 & 28:

This year's theme is Partnering Toward Employment. Registration is now open. MSRC members are encouraged to attend.

Committee Reports:

Public Relations and Quality Assurance – Jeff Moran

Public Meetings – Five meetings were held during the months of July and August to discuss WIOA and the State Plan in regards to the DORS Needs Assessment. Several Deaf/Blind individuals attended the meeting in Wheaton to address their concerns regarding the discontinuation of the SSP Grant Funding Program through the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind. The Grant for personal services was discontinued.

The next topic for discussion will center on survey development for consumers on the DORS waiting list and Public Meetings in 2017.

Blindness and Vision Services – Anil Lewis

Anil would like to nominate Sue Schaffer to chair the Blindness and Vision Services Committee due to her knowledge and expertise within the community.

Membership Committee – Anil Lewis

Anil is sending out a survey to the MSRC members to learn more about them. Anil is also investigating new members that will represent the deaf community and more business member participation.

Policy and Planning – Tom Laverty

Discussion at the retreat was brought up about DORS policy regarding presumption of eligibility; making this more consistent with the act and allowing 60 days to make that decision. DORS counselors experience difficulty obtaining the required documentation in order to make a decision within 7 days. In keeping with the act, DORS has changed the policy and approved the change for

Presumption of Eligibility to be made within 60 days and will go into effect October 1, 2016.

Council Sharing:

WTC has a new No Smoking Policy – there is no smoking allowed on WTC grounds.

New Council Business:

The next Full Council Meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2016 at the Workforce & Technology Center in T-130 from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Sandy Bowser
MSRC Staff Support